

**REMARKS**

Claims 4, 8, 10-14 and 17-34 now stand in the present application, claims 4, 8, 10-14 and 17-23 having been amended, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 15 and 16 having been canceled, and new claims 30-34 having been added. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's allowance of claims 24-29 and indication of allowable subject matter in claims 8, 10, 17 and 19-20, but respectfully submit that in view of the above amendments and the following remarks, that all of the claims standing in the application are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested in this case in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

As noted above, the Examiner indicated that claims 8, 10, 17 and 19-20 would be in condition for allowance if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants canceled rejected claims 1-3, 5-7, 9, 15 and 16 and rewrote claims 8, 10, 17 and 19-20 in independent form as suggested by the Examiner. In addition, Applicants amended claims 11-14, which had been withdrawn from consideration, to depend from allowable independent claim 8. In addition, new claims 30-33 corresponding to original dependent claims 11-14 have been added to depend from allowable independent claim 10. Also, dependent claims 18 and 21-23, which were also withdrawn from consideration, have been amended to depend from allowable independent claim 17.

In addition, to more completely define their invention, Applicants have added a new independent claim 34 which more broadly recites some of the patentable features of Applicants' invention. More particularly, claim 34 recites a fuel injector for an internal

combustion engine as comprising a housing, a stroke producing member disposed within the housing which is responsive to an electric signal to expand or contract to produce a stroke, a member disposed within the housing to add a preload to the stroke producing member, and a connector for providing the electrical signal to the stroke producing member with the connector being provided integrally with the stroke producing member.

In the above recited structure of claim 34, an actuator assembly is made by placing the stroke producing member and the preload adding member within the housing and installing the connector integrally therewith, thus resulting in an increased service life ensuring desired initial performance, maintaining the insulation, providing for ease of handling, securing reliable operation, and resulting in improved productivity.

The cited EP 0890402 reference has the piezoelectric element 5 (i.e., the stroke producing member) installed above the displacement increasing mechanism 10 to undergo preload. The piezoelectric element 5 itself does not constitute the actuator assembly in the cited reference, as it does in newly added present claim 34, thus the cited reference suffers the disadvantages of a shift in initial performance and assembly difficulties.

Since the cited references taken singly or in combination do not teach or suggest Applicants' invention as recited in newly added independent claim 34, claim 34 is also believed to patentably define thereover. In addition, dependent claim 4 has been amended to depend from newly added claim 34 and to correspond to the elements recited in independent claim 34. Since the cited art taken singly or in combination does

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June 5, 2003


not teach or suggest the further limitations enumerated in claim 4, claim 4 is believed to further patentably define thereover.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all of claims 4, 8, 10-14 and 17-34, now standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

**NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.**

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